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ABSTRACT

This paper summarizes the suggestions offered by investigative committees of U.S. historians from the 1880s to the present concerning the importance of studying history in public schools, what should be included, and how it should be taught. An integrative approach to learning, combining history with English and geography, as suggested in reports issued before the advent of social studies, has been the optimal choice. Since history's traditional role in the schools has always included the responsibility for inculcating citizenship, instructional strategies that encourage students to be aware of their own rights and responsibilities are favored and should have a multicultural, global perspective. An integrated approach that discards traditional notions of content, classroom time, subject differentiation, and teacher training--outlined both conceptually and by example--offers opportunities for exciting children's imagination and encourages enjoyment in learning. However, it makes very little difference in the long run what happens in the classroom if educational reform is not accompanied by a sincere questioning of how our society is structured and the values it promotes. (Author/PPB)

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Elementary Subjects Center
Series No. 2

HISTORY IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM

Peter Levine and Peter Berg

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Center for the Learning and Teaching of Elementary Subjects

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Michigan State University

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Center for the Learning and Teaching of Elementary Subjects

The **Center for the Learning and Teaching of Elementary Subjects** was awarded to Michigan State University in 1987 after a nationwide competition. Funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, the Elementary Subjects Center is a major project housed in the Institute for Research on Teaching (IRT). The program focuses on conceptual understanding, higher order thinking, and problem solving in elementary school teaching of mathematics, science, social studies, literature, and the arts. Center researchers are identifying exemplary curriculum, instruction, and evaluation practices in the teaching of these school subjects; studying these practices to build new hypotheses about how the effectiveness of elementary schools can be improved; testing these hypotheses through school-based research; and making specific recommendations for the improvement of school policies, instructional materials, assessment procedures, and teaching practices. Research questions include, What content should be taught when teaching for conceptual understanding and higher level learning? How do teachers concentrate their teaching to use their limited resources best? and In what ways is good teaching subject matter-specific?

The work is designed to unfold in three phases, beginning with literature review and interview studies designed to elicit and synthesize the points of view of various stakeholders (representatives of the underlying academic disciplines, intellectual leaders and organizations concerned with curriculum and instruction in school subjects, classroom teachers, state- and district-level policymakers) concerning ideal curriculum, instruction, and evaluation practices in these five content areas at the elementary level. Phase II involves interview and observation methods designed to describe current practice, and in particular, best practice as observed in the classrooms of teachers believed to be outstanding. Phase II also involves analysis of curricula (both widely used curriculum series and distinctive curricula developed with special emphasis on conceptual understanding and higher order applications), as another approach to gathering information about current practices. In Phase III, test models of ideal practice will be developed based on what has been learned and synthesized from the first two phases.

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Abstract

This paper summarizes the suggestions offered by investigative committees of American historians from the 1880s to the present concerning the importance of studying history in public schools, what should be included, and how it should be taught. The author uses the results of past inquiries to shape new suggestions about teaching history in the elementary grades.

Previous investigations by historians contain both constructive as well as damaging notions about history in the elementary school classroom. History teaches students basic questioning skills and an appreciation of the connections between their own lives and the past. An integrative approach to learning, combining history with English and geography, as suggested especially in reports issued before the advent of "social studies," makes good sense. Aware that history's traditional role in the schools has always included the responsibility for inculcating "citizenship," the author favors approaches that encourage students to be aware of their own rights and responsibilities and argues for a multicultural, global perspective.

An integrated approach that discards traditional notions of content, classroom time, subject differentiation, and teacher training--outlined both conceptually and by example--offers opportunities for exciting children's imagination and encouraging in them a love for learning. However, education in the classroom is only one way in which a young child learns about life. It will make very little difference in the long run what takes place in the classroom if educational reform is not accompanied by a sincere questioning of how our society is structured and the values it promotes.

HISTORY IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM

Peter Levine and Peter Berg*

This is one of a series of eight reports being prepared for Study 2 of Phase I of the research agenda of the Center for the Learning and Teaching of Elementary Subjects. Phase I calls for surveying and synthesizing the opinions of various categories of experts concerning the nature of elementary-level instruction in mathematics, science, social studies, literature, and the arts, with particular attention to how teaching for understanding and problem solving should be handled within such instruction. Michigan State University faculty who have made important contributions to their own disciplines were invited to become Board of Discipline members and to prepare papers describing historical developments and current thinking in their respective disciplines concerning what ought to be included in the elementary school curriculum. These papers include a sociohistorical analysis of how the discipline should be represented as an elementary school subject, what content should be taught, and the nature of the higher level thinking and problem solving outcomes that should be assessed. This paper focuses on the discipline of history; its specific charges were to summarize what professional historians have said about the teaching of history in grades K-6 and to offer the authors' own views on the subject. The other seven papers focus on the disciplines of mathematics, science, political science, literature, art, and music.

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Professional historians today, busy doing research in their own specialities, supervising graduate students, and teaching undergraduates, may be surprised to learn that prior to World War II their counterparts took an active role in proposing and shaping the way in which history would be taught in America's elementary and secondary schools. In one forum or another, invariably in conjunction with public school administrators and teachers, they offered their own observations on the state of history teaching in America's public schools, on the importance of studying history, what should be included, and how it should be taught.

The degree of this involvement and the nature of their proposals reflected both the state of the historical profession as well as of society at particular points in time.[1] With few exceptions, what is most noticeable about their pronouncements is the focus on the secondary grades, with relatively little attention given to the place and teaching of history at the elementary level. Why this has been the case, what American historians have said about grades K-6, and how their observations might help shape new directions for the future are our central concerns.

First attempts by professional historians to shape the teaching of history in elementary schools reflected the fact that many of them began their own careers as public school teachers at a time when the discipline of history was first achieving academic respectability. Men and women like Lucy Salmon, Frederick Jackson Turner, James Harvey Robinson, Herbert Baxter Adams, and Charles Beard actively participated in commissions and studies aimed at improving the place and the teaching of history in this country. At times self-serving, nevertheless, the suggestions they made about teaching are worth attention. Although often laden with racist and sexist perspectives and narrow views of citizenship reflective of the times and circumstances in which their

pronouncements emerged, the substance of much of what they had to say can still serve as a basis for reform today.

The Committee of Ten

Only eight years after the formation of the American Historical Association (AHA), American historians first ventured formally into the subject of the teaching of history in elementary and secondary schools. The occasion was a charge from the National Education Association (NEA) to all disciplines whose subjects were offered in secondary schools. Combining history with civil government and political economy, a group of 10 university professors and secondary school principals were asked to make recommendations about how these subjects should be taught in secondary schools and whether or not competency in them should be a requirement for college admission. Although hardly limited to elementary grades, the work of this so-called Committee of Ten, both in organization and content, became the basis for similar ventures down through World War II.[2]

Both in terms of composition and charge, the Committee of Ten was typical of later efforts historians became involved in that dealt with the teaching of history in precollege years. Invariably, professional historians a .ys worked in conjunction and in cooperation with members of the NEA which represented the country's elementary and secondary school teachers. Specifically, in 1894, the Committee of Ten consisted of four high school principals and six academics, including Woodrow Wilson, then of Princeton University, James Harvey Robinson, A. B. Hart, and Charles K. Adams. Although not an official member of the committee, Frederick Jackson Turner also participated in its deliberations. And, in 1894, as in later reports, rarely was history teaching in the elementary grades the only or even the most important topic of investigation. Indeed, only the so-called AHA Committee of Eight (1905-1909) focused primarily on the

elementary grades, and even here, as we shall see, these were defined to include, and ultimately emphasize, grades seven and eight. However broad in scope and hardly limited to what professional historians had to say, the report of the Committee of Ten, nevertheless remains the benchmark for much of what was to follow.

Working at a time when history as a discipline was searching for respectability both in the academy and in American public schools, and anxious to foster the case for history as a discipline in public school education, the Committee of Ten emphasized the necessity of giving history equal time and attention, along with more traditional subjects of study such as English, mathematics, and science. In making equal teaching time its primary goal, the committee developed a case for the purpose of history and recommended certain approaches to emphasize and to avoid. Almost always, however, despite the influence and worthiness of its suggestions, rarely did the committee concern itself with elementary education.

Emphasizing the importance of history to "broaden and cultivate the mind," to "counteract a narrow and provincial spirit," to teach "the invaluable mental power which we call judgment," and to help educate people to be "good citizen(s)" so that they may "exercise a salutary influence upon the affairs of [the] country," the committee urged that the study of history begin before the high school years. Concerned about establishing history as a significant part of a student's education, it demanded that it be given "equal dignity and importance" with more accepted subjects such as English and mathematics, and be taught by teachers specially trained in the discipline. Rejecting any distinction between college-and noncollege-bound students or between boys and girls, the committee asserted the importance of offering history especially to children of both sexes, most of whom would never go beyond a high school education. Working at a time of peak immigration, the committee further emphasized the

important role the study of history should play in educating "the children of foreigners" who "must depend on the schools for notions of American institutions."[3]

In all these concerns, however, elementary grades received little attention. In its brief curriculum sketch, the committee delayed formal study in history and civics until the seventh grade. Assuming that young children in the first four grades were neither equipped nor capable of studying history, the committee made clear that the first attempt to engage students in historical studies should not begin before the fifth grade. In the fifth and sixth grades, it suggested that three 40-minute periods per week be devoted to "biography and mythology." In this way students would be "stimulated and prepared" for "more serious study when the time comes."[4] Here, and indeed throughout the study of history in subsequent grades, the report urged that "history ought constantly to be illustrated by reference to the lives of great men," both because such an approach encourages "ethical training" and stimulates student interest.[5]

The emphasis on teaching citizenship, the unexplained lack of concern about the elementary grades, and a penchant for male elitism apparent in this report were also to appear in later efforts by historians to define the place of history in public school education. So too, however, were more laudatory suggestions made by the Committee of Ten. Although it offered no explicit explanation, it strongly urged that, as much as possible, the teaching of history be integrated with English, foreign languages, and geography. And while it did not deny that one objective of historical study was the acquisition of a body of "useful facts," the committee argued that this goal, one that "most teachers aim to reach," was "the most difficult and the least important outcome of historical study." Instead "facts" were at best a means to more important ends,

specifically the ability to form opinions, make generalizations and judgments, and to "apply the lessons of history to current events."[6]

The Committee of Seven

Still defensive in its efforts to solidify and establish a place for history in the secondary schools, a Committee of Seven, appointed under the auspices of the AHA in 1899, carried forward many of the arguments of the Committee of Ten in making its case. Charged in 1896 by the AHA to examine the teaching of "history in the secondary schools and to draw up a scheme of college entrance requirements," by definition it excluded careful consideration of elementary grade curriculum. Nevertheless, because its defense of history became a critical part of the rationale for the Committee of Eight report of 1909 that dealt exclusively with elementary education, it, too, deserves attention.[7]

Concerned with drawing attention to what they felt was a neglected discipline in the public schools, the Committee of Seven, composed of six professional historians and one secondary school teacher, outlined the "value of historical study" at the outset of their long report. Although more elaborate in presentation than the justification offered by the Committee of Ten, it offered a similar case. From cultivating "intelligent citizens" and nurturing the ability to analyze and to make judgments, to appreciating and understanding the present by becoming aware of how things came to be, history was offered as a critical part of the training of America's youth. Unlike the Committee of Ten, the Committee of Seven did not make a special case for history's role in shaping the education of immigrant children. However, it was far more specific than its predecessor in detailing the specific skills study in the discipline offered. The ability to arrange and organize facts and to gather information, the art of using information to make generalizations and to "see relationships," "analogies" and to understand motives, encouraged the development of

"the scientific habit of mind and thought." No less important was history's ability to develop an appreciation of culture and of reading, and the development of library skills.[8]

This statement of purpose, as the subsequent sections of the committee's report made clear, was tied to the development of a four-year high school curriculum that encompassed systematic study of ancient, European, English and American history. Only in an brief but interesting appendix was the curriculum's relation to the elementary grades even tangentially considered. Written by Lucy Salmon, this section on history in the elementary grades was not received by the full committee in time for review and thus expressed only her personal assessment. After reviewing data from some 40 elementary school programs scattered throughout the United States, Salmon expressed sharp criticism of current conditions. Most upsetting to her was the lack of any clear place for history in the elementary curriculum and the misuse of what passed for history to teach a distorted sense of patriotism concerned with "glorifying one country at the possible expense of the truth." Describing what existed as "history suspended in midair," she criticized the lack of educational theory as a base for instruction and an overemphasis on American history, especially troublesome in areas with large foreign populations whose people have no familiarity with republican institutions. Failure to develop students' interest in history before they were 12 and the lack of integration of history with geography and literature also came in for criticism.[9]

Not content to criticize, Salmon also offered general suggestions for reform, far more comprehensive than anything yet attempted by American historians. Having studied how history was taught in England, France, and Germany, she based her suggestions on what she felt worked there, showing surprisingly little concern about potential cultural barriers to transference of method or subject. Drawing on ancient, Western European, and American experience, Salmon

urged that students first be introduced to history in grades three and four. Here, by telling stories from mythology and biography, encompassing everything from the Iliad, to Hiawatha, Columbus, Mohammed, and Miles Standish, student interest in historical information and materials could easily be aroused by good teachers trained in both history and literature. Having established an interest in history among students whose idea of time and place were "imperfectly developed," they would then be able to go on to more systematic study in grades five and six; devoted respectively to Greek and Roman History to 800 A.D. and medieval and modern European history to the present. Such study would provide both an understanding of the "bedrock" of modern democratic politics and an appreciation of European history as the necessary connection between Greek and Roman culture and American civilization and government. This elementary education would set the stage for the study of English history in grade seven, American history in grade eight, followed by the four-year high school plan developed by the Committee of Seven.[10]

Salmon's proposals elaborated somewhat on the brief reference to elementary grades in the report of the Committee of Ten and clearly dovetail with the curriculum suggestions for secondary grades offered by the Committee of Seven of which she was a part. Yet she offered no specific sense of history's purpose in the elementary grades beyond criticizing its misuse in fostering blind patriotism and encouraging its potential for creating an interest to be cultivated in higher grades. Within a decade, the AHA, again in cooperation with the NEA sought to remedy this situation by focusing on the elementary grades.

The Committee of Eight

Aware of the relative lack of attention given to elementary education, both professional historians and history teachers attending the annual convention of the AHA in 1905 proposed the establishment of a committee to develop a

history curriculum for elementary grades as part of a broader charge to consider the state of history teaching. Consciously comprised of a mixture of college and university professors, elementary school teachers, and administrators, the committee spent four years carrying out its charge. Along the way the committee met at subsequent AHA meetings and at secondary school conferences and also solicited the advice and opinions of a number of elementary school teachers and administrators throughout the country. Like earlier reports, it is hardly the reflection solely of what professional historians had to say, but it is as close as we come to such statements, and certainly the most detailed offered.[11]

Chaired by James Alton James of Northwestern University, the Committee of Eight produced a volume of some 120 pages: prefaced by an introduction which included a general explanation of why the study of history was important, there followed 50 pages devoted to specific curriculum recommendations for grades one through six and 15 pages covering teacher training. Far less defensive than earlier efforts which felt obliged to make a case for integrating this relatively new subject into established elementary and secondary school curriculums, James found it unnecessary "to set forth in elaborate argument" the desirability of providing history in the elementary grades. Rather he referred readers to the earlier elaboration of the Committee of Seven and to the simple declaration that "a leading aim of history teaching is to help the child appreciate what his fellows are doing and to help him to intelligent voluntary action in agreement or disagreement with them."[12] Noting the emphasis on American history in the context of "the history of its people before they came" as central to the blueprint for grades one through eight that would follow, James laid out the overriding principles that governed the report's detailed curriculum. Certain that pupils even in the sixth grade had no intellectual capacity to "study scientific history," James emphasized the need to stimulate

the imagination and leave lasting impressions on young minds about the excitement and richness of historical events as a basis for more systematic study later. Concerned that too much repetition of material and unexciting teaching dulled students' passion for history, he urged teachers to make history more "picturesque" and "lively" and to sacrifice "a hurried survey of the whole field," presumably encouraging more imaginative and detailed study of limited material.[13]

Outlining in specific terms an elementary school program inclusive through grade eight and connected to an expectation of high school study, the report proceeded to grade-by-grade curriculum statements. Short on explanations of intent but detailed in specifying topics and materials for both students and teachers, they reflect a time long before professional educators on all levels framed such studies in the context of issues such as contributions to skill development, "cognitive processing," or "breadth of coverage vs. depth of processing dilemma."

The report's recommendations for grades one through three, for example, offer very little substance about the objectives of study. According to the report, children in the first three grades were not able to understand the "meaning of events" nor "appreciate causal relations." Nevertheless they can "understand simple facts, basic ideas" and "universal truths symbolized in stories," crave life and are fond of "movement, the dramatic, the picturesque, the personal of deeds of daring, tales of heroism, and of thrilling adventure." Emphasizing the role of teachers in telling good stories to children unable to read on their own, specific curriculum suggestions for grades one and two focus on "primitive life" and public holidays. Stories about Hiawatha, George Washington, and Thanksgiving supplemented by the drawing of pictures, construction of wigwams, and involvement in other "hands-on" activities are encouraged as ways to stimulate student imagination and interest in this historical material.

Recognizing that by third-grade students can read, the committee recommends inclusion of stories that will "tend to develop an historical sense." By emphasizing the celebration of public holidays and the heroic actions of historical figures students will begin to appreciate the notion of heroism.[14]

Unlike the Committees of Ten and Seven, the Committee of Eight had no place for mythology. Cautioning teachers to distinguish between the legendary and the historic, the report encouraged the selection of real individuals who have interesting stories to tell and provided a suggested list including biblical figures such as Joseph and David, Cincinnatus, William Tell, Joan of Arc, "famous men of the Middle Ages," and George Washington. Teachers were also urged to go back through the material on Indians learned in earlier grades and to insist that their students memorize the "Star Spangled Banner."[15]

Presented without clear definition of purpose, these specific curriculum suggestions present real problems. For example, what exactly did the Committee of Eight mean by "primitive" and what was the purpose of studying Indians as "the best example of primitive life?" Examples such as building teepees, making moccasins, and wearing headdresses may well stimulate nascent intellectual curiosity and historical imagination; however, in the wrong hands they may also lend themselves to portraying Indians as primitive as a means of legitimating white expansion, regardless of the costs. Nor would this be an unlikely possibility, in an age that announced American exceptionalism and with a government that engaged both in a restrictive Indian policy at home and a vigorous expansionist and often racist foreign policy abroad. Educators in the Soviet Union or the People's Republic of China are explicit in their belief that young children can be indoctrinated in political ideology and the legitimacy of state action. Americans generally express no such explicit goal, at least for very young children. Despite the claims of the Committee of Eight and other commissions that young children, at least through grade four, were considered

incapable of such mastery American educators at times have structured learning experiences to achieve the same results. Indeed, even the limited goals of stimulating the imagination can serve such ends. Without impugning such motives on the Committee of Eight, failure to be more specific about intent, objectives, and substance of curriculum make their recommendations suspect.

Similar issues arise in the curriculum packages for grades four through six, all of which serve as preparation for a full-scale chronological study of American history from the exploration of North America through nineteenth century American history in grades seven and eight. Building on a range of historical figures introduced in grade three, the next two grades focus on the historical context of personal adventures by emphasizing "historical scenes and persons in American history." Like the Committee of Ten, the Committee of Eight recommended integration of literature and geography with historical study for these grades. Even more strongly than earlier reports, it called for an emphasis on the identification of "leaders, heroes, and patriots" with important movements or events. Indeed, the committee urged teachers to make the "strongest feature" of study, the "leader." Student interest in "the representative man, who embodies in himself the ideals and aims of the people he represents," the report noted, is the best way in which "historic truth makes its strongest appeal to the young."[16]

So important was this emphasis, first introduced here and expanded upon in curriculum recommendations for seventh and eighth grades, that in a later section on method, the committee argued that teaching the careers of "distinguished men" identified with great social, economic, or political movements, was the best way to teach students the "true meaning of history, for the aims and aspirations of great leaders reveal the aims and aspirations that inspire the people."[17]

Ignoring the sticky questions of the meaning of "historical truth," the implicit rejection of class, and the distortion inherent in "great men" history, curriculum suggestions followed apace. Fourth grade, for example, included American explorers, Virginia life, New England Life, Benjamin Franklin, and George Washington. Fifth-grade suggestions began with Patrick Henry and included the Great West as personified by Daniel Boone, Washington's inauguration, Thomas Jefferson, life on a cotton plantation, the Civil War through the stories of Abraham Lincoln and Robert E. Lee, and "the great industries." Biography as a guide through a rough chronology of the American past seemed to be the rule.[18]

Suggestions for these grades, similar to those for grade three, focus on elite white males with bare mention or discussion of women, great or common, or, for that matter, of blacks, immigrants, or anyone who was not white Anglo-Saxon Protestant in background or beliefs. The absence of class, ethnic, or racial difference and the implicit assumption that all people in American society always share the same "aims and aspirations" suggests consensus history, with all of its pitfalls, long before it became popular in post-World War II America. Clearly there is no reason to expect historians--representing a profession dominated at that time by white males who did not address such topics or issues in their own work--to suggest that such topics be included in grade school curriculums, especially at a time when open and legal restrictions against women, blacks, and immigrants existed in American society. Nevertheless, such a perspective imposed limits on encouraging open-ended, questioning, and critical attitudes towards learning which cannot be ignored.

Although the Committee of Eight represented the only effort to focus specifically on the elementary grades, it is clear, even here, that significant study of history was considered to be the domain of the secondary schools, with elementary grades at best providing some initial stimulation and interest in

the notion of historical material. It was simply assumed that children under the age of 10 or 11 did not have the ability, patience, or interest for formal, systematic training in history. By the sixth grade, however, more serious study of history was possible. While the Committee of Eight devoted only 22 pages to first- through fifth-grade curriculum recommendations, the sixth grade occupied some 26 pages of its report. Once again, it suggests both useful ideas for how to approach the study of history in the elementary grades as well as real limits.

The sixth-grade curriculum focused on showing students where Americans came from and the roots of their culture. Topics ranging from "The Greeks and What We Learned From Them" to "How the English Began to Win Their Liberties," chosen from the sweep of world history, aimed to connect American history, as it unfolded in North America, to its European roots. For example, a unit on Roman history was deemed essential because the Romans carried on Greek traditions and spread them to France, Spain, England, and Germany, all places from which Americans came. "In this way, the Romans," the report argued, "are to be considered as one of the makers of America."[19] While hardly disputing the connections here, the report is written in a didactic way that seems to suggest that these other civilizations and cultures existed solely to encourage the eventual growth and development of the United States. The implicit ethnocentrism inherent here remains consistent with much of how America presented itself to the world in these early years of the 20th century.

As with other grades, the report offers no intention of developing certain skills nor is it concerned, at this level, in developing any sense of history as a discipline or encouraging commitment to absorption of a body of information. Although it does suggest that the use of a textbook should begin in this grade, it states the goal of sixth grade as encouraging interest in history and making "certain impressions which shall exercise a guiding influence over the

child's intellectual growth" and "to furnish him with a framework into which his later reading or study shall place what he acquires."[20]

Two other sections of the Committee of Eight report also deserve notice, again for what they tell us of how historians have reacted in the past and what our own recommendations might be for the future: teacher training and civics. Consistent with its curriculum recommendations and expectations for elementary students, the report suggested the need for different levels of teacher training depending upon the grades to be taught. For all grades, "first and foremost," the report emphasized that elementary history teachers have "knowledge of the subject" and also a love of history. Nevertheless, distinctions were made about teacher preparation depending on grade level. For grades one through four, where the emphasis was less on content than on using selected material to stimulate interest and imagination, it was important that teachers be "good narrator[s]" and that they learn the art of being a good reader and of making interesting presentations in the normal schools where they were trained. Indeed it was even suggested that normal schools should have masters of diction and instruct teachers "how to develop a questioning skill." Because grades five and six, and especially seven and eight, dealt more directly and fully with the sweep of American history and selected aspects of Western development, the report urged that teachers for these grades be especially knowledgeable of content and even suggested a special test for them before they were permitted to teach history. Aware of the general responsibility for all subjects that elementary teachers have, the report offered the possibility of two types of elementary school teachers: the all-around teacher for the lower grades, and the group teacher, trained in one of two combinations--history, geography and literature or arithmetic and nature study--to teach the upper elementary grades. Under this system, those who taught history in grades five and six would have the opportunity to spend more time learning their subject

and also be in a position to practice the integrated approach to learning involving three subjects that the report recommended.[21]

Although not as drenched in unquestioning patriotism as other pronouncements by historians were to be about the place of civics in elementary school education, the Committee of Eight, like its predecessors, accepted the responsibility of history to teach citizenship. Civics, it argued, should "permeate the entire school life of the child," with special and separate attention paid to it by the fifth and sixth grades. Although no detailed curriculum proposals were offered, the committee hoped that students would learn that they are members of a variety of political groups that work for them and also of the division of labors among these groups--be it local, state, or national government or other agencies with some sort of community responsibility such as firefighters or the police. Suggesting that by the fifth grade, lessons in civics revolving around contemporary affairs alternate with lessons in history, the report concluded that students would thus achieve the ultimate goal of an education in civics: "That in the many-sided life of our American democracy there are opportunities on every hand for American boys and girls to exercise all they have found brave and wise and true in the study of their European and American ancestry."[22]

The Schafer Committee, World War I, and "The Social Studies"

In its pronouncements on civics and its curriculum recommendations, the Committee of Eight, both implicitly and at times explicitly, endorsed an ethnocentric, celebratory view of the American experience and American society. Even more emphatic in its attempt to link history in the elementary grades to such concerns was the next major undertaking by historians to deal with elementary curriculum: the Committee on History and Education for Citizenship in the Schools (1919-20); the so-called Schafer Committee.

Named after its chair, Professor Joseph Schafer, this committee's work was shaped by two critical factors: American involvement in World War I that to some degree recast the concerns of educators about what students needed to know and, more significantly, the publication in 1916 of the NEA's report on the teaching of history in the secondary schools. This report, written by a committee that contained only one historian, James Harvey Robinson, rejected the notion of history in favor of "social studies," an ill-defined conglomeration of history, economics, political science, sociology, and other subjects aimed at making school studies relevant to contemporary life and to the cultivation of citizenship. Subsequent efforts by historians to shape how history would be taught in public schools, including the Schafer Committee, had to deal with this new reality; one that diminished history's status as a disciplinary subject for America's youth.[23]

The Schafer Committee, represented the combined efforts of the AHA, the NEA, and the National Board of Historical Service. As its formal title suggests, its task involved investigating and recommending ways to teach American citizenship, from high school to elementary grades in rural and urban settings, to both native Americans and to immigrants. In the process of meeting its charge, it also developed a program for the social studies in the elementary grades that at times was far more specific about skill development, subject matter, and purpose than even the Committee of Eight.

No better example of its ambitious attempt to emphasize skill development is the Schafer Committee's recommendations for the first and second grades. Intentionally avoiding specific suggestions about what material to use, the committee warned about expecting too much from children at this age in terms of insisting that they develop any sense of civic responsibility or appreciation of history. Nevertheless, the committee noted that "history will be well served" if in these first two years of schooling children learn how to read well and

acquire certain learning skills including the ability "to interpret . . . thought which is simply and plainly expressed . . . to reproduce with accuracy the substance of what he reads," and to formulate and state the essential facts of what is observed or read.[24]

Having mastered these basic skills of comprehension and expression by the age of seven, students, according to the committee's report, would then embark over grades three through eight on an exploration of different fields of history, each one geared towards gradually improving their intellectual skills to the "point where the mental grasp is relatively mature, permitting a measure of discriminating reflection." Curriculum suggestions for each grade, along with the purpose to be achieved, were offered. For example, recommendations for grade three called for the "first systematic work in history" by emphasizing the pre-Greek world, especially that of early man, Egypt, and Palestine.[25] Although this call for "systematic" study comes much earlier than in other reports, the committee, consistent with its predecessors, urged that material used emphasize personality and aim at stimulating imagination and historical curiosity. No less important, however, were the critical lessons in civics that could be learned, even at this young age. Reflecting both the patriotic fervor created by World War I as well as the relevancy insisted upon by the new "social studies," the report noted that, in the hands of a "good teacher," stories of the cave man and his struggles for survival could help students better understand their own world and responsibilities in it. "Success through cooperation," for example, "is illustrated on the world theatre by the recent war just as the cave man illustrates it in his war against the Saber Tooth." For those eight-year-olds not taken by the fight for the Argonne, interest and civic pride might be perked by recognizing that the cave man's "community fire, guarded and kept burning by a specially appointed member of the family, has its analogy in modern municipal power and lighting plants."[26]

Having made use of prehistory to understand World War I and public utilities, students in the fourth grade would make similar use of Greek and Roman civilization. Comparisons between American heroes and their ancient counterparts, for example, George Washington and Cincinnatus, would encourage feelings of sacrifice and patriotism and contribute to students' "moral and ethical training." Study of Greek temples through story, picture, and clay-modeling, in conjunction with examination of contemporary buildings such as the Lincoln Memorial would develop an appreciation of the transmission of culture and the civic and moral virtues associated with the men for whom monuments were built.[27]

As prelude to the systematic study of American history beginning in the seventh grade, the last two years of the elementary curriculum would deal with the settlement of the New World, again in ways that emphasized an appreciation of American values and civilization. Acknowledging that tradition dictated a focus on the wide range of colonization involving the Spanish, French, Dutch, and English, the committee nevertheless called for a new direction--one that emphasized British colonization and English history. Unabashedly ethnocentric, the committee noted that in this way, students will begin to appreciate the special roots that have made the United States and its institutions "unique." Aware that two years of social studies required more than a focus on colonization, it also called for exploration of the Middle Ages, the Crusades, chivalry, and important inventions and discoveries. Not only would such work develop students' sense of geography, but more specifically, the "geographical inheritance" of "the race."[28]

Full of the same ethnocentric tendencies found in earlier reports about elementary and secondary school teaching, the Schafer report contained an extra measure of responsibility for teaching a narrow patriotism that was as much a product of World War I jingoism as the debate within the educational

establishment that called on history and other related disciplines subsumed under social studies to be more "socially efficient" and relevant to America's youth. Perhaps the controversy this latter issue caused among professional historians accounts for the report's attempt to lay out as ambitiously as it did the skills and goals that history curriculum might also serve in the lower grades. If so, there is an ironic twist here for even before the final report of the committee was released, it withdrew its recommendations for the elementary grades and supported instead the proposals of the Committee of Eight on the grounds that neither textbooks nor syllabi existed for teachers to utilize its recommendations.[29]

AHA Commission on the Social Studies

After the dissolution of the Schafer Committee, the historical profession made one of its most comprehensive and energetic attempts to shape the teaching of history in the schools. Beginning in 1925, the AHA established a new committee to investigate concerns within the profession that the social studies curriculum across the nation was, "in a state of chaos."[30] These concerns were not, it should be noted, critical of the introduction of the social studies, but instead, expressed a desire to make them a more useful and beneficial addition to the school curriculum. In fact, the makeup of the AHA's new committee, which included scholars from the disciplines of political science, law, geography, sociology, and history, as well as prominent school educators, was in clear recognition of the emergence of social studies in the schools. The committee reported to the AHA in 1927 with a plan to study and improve the condition of social studies education. Known as the Commission on the Social Studies, it inaugurated a five-year study that represents a prominent example of the historical profession's real commitment to the place of history in the schools. Despite its efforts, however, the commission was not as influential

on American education as its originators first hoped. The objectives of the commission were laid out in a 1932 volume entitled A Charter for the Social Sciences in the Schools. Drafted by Charles A. Beard, one of the country's best known historians, the charter recognized that, "there is a need of wise readjustment in our thinking and our educational program to a world that has become urbanized, mechanized, and interlocked in its social, economic, political, and cultural interests."[31] Indeed, given the conditions and realities of a nation and a world gripped in the throes of economic depression, the commission appeared eager to set out on new paths to educate coming generations of American youth.

Similar to its predecessors, the commission was greatly concerned with the formation of good citizenship. However, in sharp contrast to the narrow patriotism and ethnocentric elitism which typified the Schafer Committee a decade earlier, the commission's stance on citizenship was more in line with Lucy Salmon's expressed dissatisfaction with, "glorifying one country at the possible expense of the truth." For example, in its declaration on citizenship it concluded that the, "supreme purpose" of civic instruction was the, "creation of rich, many-sided personalities, equipped with practical knowledge and inspired by ideals so that they can make their way and fulfill their mission in a changing society which is part of a world complex."[32]

The creation of "rich and many-sided personalities" was possible if certain skills, habits, and attitudes were taught in the schools. Information concerning the, "conditioning elements, realities, forces, and ideas of the modern world in which life must be lived" was crucial. But to attain this information, certain skills were necessary. The ability to collect data from a variety of sources could help one "know the truth." Skill in analysis, or, "the power to break massed data or large themes into manageable units," was also beneficial, as was the skill of synthesis which allowed the individual to draw

conclusions and preconceptions from disparate pieces of information. Memory was important, too, and like the other skills could be developed in each branch of the social sciences using appropriate materials and, where ever possible, "the raw materials of life as well as printed or graphic representations of it." In addition to these skills, the commission believed that the social sciences were responsible for instilling in young pupils the habits, attitudes, will power, courage, aesthetic appreciation, and imagination that was needed if their goal was to be achieved. In Beard's words, for example, history was dealing with the work of the imagination because it traced the rise and growth of ideas. This was an important educational element, he suggested since, "all rich personalities are imaginative, and if education is concerned with the making of them, it must cherish those who can dream dreams and see visions."[33]

In many respects, the charter was a visionary statement which offered new and worthwhile directions to explore, but it ignored specific recommendations or concrete examples to help with this work. It did not, for example, highlight the discipline of history. Unlike all the previous committees which made the teaching and studying of history the cornerstone of their efforts, the commission made little attempt to distinguish between, "history," "civic instruction," or, "the social sciences." Instead, all appeared to be interchangeable. The charter had little to say regarding K through 6 education as well. In fact, the only time the lower grades were mentioned was during a discussion on the importance of information gathering. Here, Beard maintained that "even in the lower grades it is possible to awaken and stimulate this latent capacity."[34] Yet, it should be noted that nowhere in the charter were distinctions made concerning grade levels. Instead, implicit throughout was a sense that the education of a rich, many-sided personality began early in life and was not confined to any grade level or, for that matter, just to the schools alone.

Some clarification appeared when the commission released a volume entitled Conclusions and Recommendations of the Commission. In a statement regarding the "organization of the program," the commission declared that, "instruction in the social sciences should begin in the earliest years of schooling," by making use of, "the life and institutions of the surrounding community." In the elementary school, "major attention would be devoted to a study of the making of the community and the nation, although materials bearing on the development of world society and culture would by no means be excluded." Simple social relationships of the family and the neighborhood were to be introduced to the child who was then encouraged to become an active participant in these social activities. Starting from this "first hand study of life," the child could be led to examine the institutions of the community in relation to other cultures and peoples, past and present. Thus the pupil, it was argued, "would develop an active interest in the fortunes of society," and ultimately become acquainted with "the evolution of American culture."[35]

Elementary education was rarely mentioned in the other works of the commission written by historians. Howard K. Beale's A History of Freedom of Teaching in American Schools, a comprehensive account of the political, social, and economic forces that he believed controlled the schools and teachers, was not aimed at any specific level of teaching, but was left intentionally for all teachers "in schools below the college level."[36] This did not diminish the overall strength of the work, however, for Beale's analysis of the growing dangers to freedom in the schools had important information for all who taught and cared about education. Merle Curti's Social Ideas in American Education, a study of social attitudes towards education and the thoughts of important educational thinkers, and Bessie Pierce's Citizen's Organizations and the Civic Training of Youth, which described the many citizens' groups interested in civic instruction in the schools, also offered little specifics regarding

history in the K through 6 classroom.[37] Curti, for instance selected those social ideas which had to do with "the purposes of elementary and secondary education."[38] Yet, similar to Beale, both studies were important discussions of material which could benefit the direction and well-being of American education, elementary or otherwise. Moreover, they were within the commission's stated charge, "to include in its scope every important element affecting school instruction in the subject of the social studies."[39]

Despite the commission's dedication to its task, the lack of specificity throughout the work made it difficult to implement for most social studies educators. Unlike the Committee of Eight, which offered detailed outlines and courses of action to follow for history teaching in the schools, the commission had little to say with regards to what actually should transpire in the classroom. This was not surprising however, since there was not real attempt to gather information or include the ideas of those who actually taught social studies in schools. Lacking, too, were concrete formulas for the improvement of teacher training, curriculum, texts, or even a better defined role for the place of history in social studies education. Indeed, as suggested previously, it was often impossible to distinguish between civic instruction, the social studies, and history in the school curriculum. As a result, the commission was a disappointment to many social studies educators. Disappointment also existed among some commission members; some were less upset over what the report omitted than its inclusion of what they believed to be the less traditional thinking of Beard, who had established himself as the commission's philosophical leader. This dissent was openly reflected in their refusal to endorse fully the commission's final report. It was an unfortunate ending to what still must be regarded as the historical profession's greatest attempt to lend its expertise to American schools and the social studies curriculum.

After the commission was dissolved, the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), formed in 1921 to help lead and organize the social studies curriculum, felt increasing pressure from its members to recommend a course of study to be followed by schools throughout the country. In its preliminary investigation of this subject, the NCSS asked leading educators to provide what steps could be taken to improve the social studies curriculum.[40] Among these leaders was A. C. Krey, who chaired the Commission on the Social Studies. In 1939, this University of Minnesota historian proposed that the best curriculum was one which offered "the greatest opportunity to link the lessons of human experience with the actual operation of society."[41] Krey outlined a detailed program which included grades 1 through 6. In his plan, work revolved around four categories: knowledge of the social web, relating community activities to the social web, utilizing individual aptitudes and abilities, and relating current events to the community. Specifically, children were first made aware of their neighborhood. As their reading and writing skills improved, this knowledge was expanded to include state, national, and world history.

Krey's experimental program for the social studies was similar to the reports of the Committee of Ten and the Commission the Social Studies in the sense that, it too, emphasized a broad learning experience. According to Krey's program, as early as the first-grade pupils were to be introduced to ever-widening circles of life and events which surround them and contribute to their existence. The program was mindful and respectful of the past, but history was featured only as one facet on the social studies curriculum. Geographical knowledge was also emphasized. Points of local interest including stores, factories, and public buildings were introduced in the early grades and later world geography was promoted, as was the recognition that regional and national development was linked to origins found many years earlier in Europe and the rest of the world.

When simple narrative history was highlighted, its focus did not have an ethnocentric bend nor was it narrowly confined to the production of patriotic citizens as it was with the recommendations of the Committee of Ten or the Schafer Committee. The glory of American individualism, so important in the writing and teaching of American history, does not appear prominently in Krey's curriculum. Biographies of the so-called great men that dominated the K through 6 curriculums of other reports are also omitted. In their place, the importance of the group is introduced, not only in group study projects, but also in the making of society. On the whole, then, Krey offered a social studies curriculum which detailed a plan that might help achieve some of the goals first proposed in the 1932 Charter for the Social Sciences.[42]

Any chance that the Minnesota experiment, as Krey's project was labelled, had to influence the social studies curriculum in American schools was tempered by the nation's entrance into World War II. Patriotic fervor was widespread as Americans made preparations to defend their country's honor and democratic heritage. This sentiment included concern over the teaching of American history in the schools. One American who was particularly interested in this subject was Alan Nevins, an influential historian at Columbia University, who, in a New York Times article, asked his country whether, "we have done enough to teach American history in the lower schools, in the high schools, and the colleges, and has it been taught all right?" Nevins concluded that, "our young people are all too ignorant of American history" and that the nation's educational institutions had failed to make its pupils "thoroughly good American citizens." Nevins was less concerned with the school curriculum, however, than what he called "the deplorably haphazard, chaotic, and ineffective" set of educational requirements in American history and government. He cited 22 states which had no real requirements for this field and criticized educators who only required American history beginning in the seventh grade.[43]

Nevins' critical thoughts on the state of history in the classroom suggested that the period of experimentation with the social studies curriculum and the opportunity to educate and prepare young citizens for life in a complex world was over. Instead, Nevins' article, entitled, "American History for Americans" pointed out the primacy of history in the social studies curriculum as well as the responsibility of the schools in their social studies curriculum to teach the nation's young to be part of a patriotic, obedient, and useful citizenry prepared to save democracy and preserve America's influence in the world. This attitude was reflected in one more attempt by the country's historical profession to take its part in the purpose, extent, and quality of the study and teaching of history in the schools.

AHA and NCSS Combine Forces

In 1942, the AHA; the Mississippi Valley Historical Association, and the NCSS agreed to combine forces "to study the current controversy concerning the teaching of American history" and to prepare a report consisting of a description and analysis of the situation, a statement of principles and specific recommendations. A representative committee, including a number of notable historians, was formed and two years later their report American History in Schools and Colleges was released. Working under the premise that Americans did not know their history, "as well as they might to be good citizens" the committee studied the state of American history in the classroom and made recommendations for its improvement.[44]

Their recommendations for K through 6 leaned heavily towards the teaching and understanding of what this group referred to as the, "enduring elements of American history." Although the committee recognized and welcomed the introduction of the social studies, it expressed concern that the discipline of history had become diluted into a discussion of, "contemporary problems" or "current

events." This was a problem, committee members argued, because good citizens could not understand their society "without knowledge of its past" nor give their "fullest loyalty to the nation without understanding the ideals and aspirations which have developed in its history."[45] Consequently, the committee recommended the equivalent of one full year's work in American history in the middle grades devoted primarily to the "Age of Discovery." Under the rubric, "How People Live" were such topics as Exploration of the Hemisphere, People Who Came to America, Ways of Living in the First Settlements, and, Study of the North American Map. Dates and individuals were also featured as were certain skills which could be taught in the teaching of American history. These included an expanded vocabulary, the ability to trace simple sequences, and distinguish simple generalizations from specific statements.[46]

The committee also devoted attention to the improvement of teaching at the elementary level. "The crying need in American history is not for more requirements," it insisted, "but for better teaching." Although the committee realized that the elementary education teacher had to prepare for many fields, it recommended a minimum program to teach history or other social studies. A "thorough training in United States history, including a general survey and study in at least one specialized period or topic," and, "intensive study" in European or World history made up the committee's minimum history requirement for a qualified elementary education teacher who taught the social studies, even though world history was not recommended until high school.[47]

The historical profession's latest attempt to venture into the school classroom contrasted sharply with A. C. Krey's program and the Commission on the Social Studies work of the 1930s. It was similar, however, to the work of earlier attempts by historians to deal with elementary education. The committee made specific recommendations for grades four, five, and six, but like the Committee of Seven, was silent on the primary grades. Whether they believed

pupils at this early stage were unprepared for the study of history or that time there was better spent on reading and writing skills is unclear. Great men dominated the content and were emphasized as keys to understanding American history. Although students were introduced to the concept that America was home to a "mixed people," there was no mention of women, African slaves, and only passing reference to the presence of Native Americans. Under this curriculum, young children would leave the elementary classroom with the strong impression that America was dominated by white males and that their way of life was supreme.

This type of curriculum was supposedly important for success in World War II. But the American historical profession had, for the most part, only duplicated what had been achieved by its predecessors before World War I. Unlike the earlier work, however, the work of this latest committee of historians was not followed by similar efforts. Indeed, since the publication of American History in Schools and Colleges the historical profession has separated itself from history in the school curriculum. Moreover, its interest in K through 6 history education has been practically nonexistent.

This almost half-century of silence must influence any effort to explain or analyze the attempts of the historical community to assert itself in the schools since the 1930s. The work of the Commission on the Social Studies, Krey's Minnesota project, and the publication of American History in the Schools and Colleges were similar to the activity and commitment to the discipline which characterized the work of historians before 1920. Like them, historians in the 1930s and 1940s believed strongly in the importance of history in the schools, including the elementary grades, not only to help a child gain a sense of identity, but also for history's ability to assist children in acquiring crucial learning skills. They were similar, too, for their somewhat self-serving nature and their emphasis on building good citizenship, although

they varied on its definition. However, among these activities after 1930, there was a certain confusion over history as a discipline and its place in the school curriculum, a confusion which never afflicted the Committees of Ten, Eight, or Seven. On paper, at least, historians since 1930 have accepted the social studies, but their disinterest in them as worthy of their time and expertise, particularly at the elementary level, suggests otherwise.

Disinterest Since World War II

Since World War II, historians have kept themselves distant from any discussion of history in the K through 6 classroom. In the midst of the introduction of the "new social studies" in the 1950s, the curriculum changes that came as a result of events in the 1960s and 1970s, and the most recent assault on our educational system initiated by the Federal government, the historical profession and individual historians have remained virtually silent. Occasionally, a perceived crisis affecting the stature of the profession or the field has ignited some interest. For example, in 1975, Richard Kirkendall, executive secretary of the Organization of American Historians (OAH), reported on the distressing lack of interest in history in the colleges, a lack which he linked to the disinterest in the subject at the school level. Yet it was clear from his discussion that greater emphasis was placed upon increasing historical interest at the high school level than the elementary level.[48] America's other historical organization, the AHA, showed similar concerns. In fact, a teaching division was created to improve history teaching at all levels. That said, however, there was no attempt in any of the following discussions to address the unique needs and qualities of history at the K through 6 level.

Recently, the AHA, the OAH, and the NCSS launched a new effort to reform the social studies curriculum. The NCSS has maintained that it intends to study the K through 6 curriculum, "to promote the cause of the reform and

renewal of the social studies in the schools."[49] Whatever shape this new initiative takes, it is hoped that it will keep in mind both the promise and the pitfalls of previous investigations by historians about the teaching of history in the elementary school classroom. For us, both sides of the ledger are obvious. History's role in teaching students basic questioning skills and an appreciation of the connections between their own lives and the past is unquestioned. An emphasis on an integrative approach to learning, combining history with English and geography--as suggested especially in reports issued before the advent of "social studies"--also makes good sense. Aware that history's traditional role in the schools has always included the responsibility for inculcating "citizenship," we reject those suggestions that demand unquestioning patriotism and support those approaches that encourage students to be aware of their own rights and responsibilities without sacrificing or belittling those of others. In this respect, the parochial, ethnocentric, sexist, and racist tendencies exhibited in some of these exercises by historians, tendencies contradictory to the very kinds of thinking that the study of history should encourage, must be replaced by those suggestions that argue for a multicultural, global perspective. These ideas, along with other insights garnered from what professional historians have had to say about the teaching of history in the elementary grades, guide our own suggestions for what ideally should be done in these critical years of our childrens' education.[50]

New Approaches: An Overview

In beginning this exercise in "idealism" several caveats need to be made clear. Unlike our early 20th century predecessors, neither of the authors of this study have ever taught in elementary or secondary grades. Lacking first-hand classroom experience with elementary age children, we also have not read very deeply into the large literature on pedagogy and child development.

Although aware of some of the concerns that preoccupy professional education people today, we have done our best to avoid becoming immersed or trapped in their own language and arguments about educational theory or curriculum. Our apparent lack of preparation for what follows is calculated and not a sign of indolence on our part. As professional historians teaching at the university level who have some knowledge of the past recommendations of historians and who also have some appreciation of the pressures and demands placed on elementary school teachers today, we asked ourselves, what would we like students to come to college-level history study with and how much of that can be developed in what they learn in their first seven years of American public school education today?

Most students who take college history courses are not majoring in history; indeed at major universities anywhere from 70 to 90% of student credit hours generated by history classes come from students required to take a history course as part of their majors (such as elementary education majors) or to fulfill some basic university requirement in general education.[51] Based solely on our personal experience and what others in the profession tell us have been theirs, this large audience of nonhistory majors has not been well-prepared for college-level instruction in history. Most broadly, at least as they demonstrate it in discussion and lecture sections and in their writing assignments, they lack a basic appreciation of and interest in what history is all about. For many of them, it appears, prior instruction has focused on rote memorization of facts and dates with no appreciation of interpretation or evidence. If asked to define what history is, their response seems limited to an emphasis on formal politics, the history of presidential administrations and an occasional war. Although American history high school texts now conscientiously include sections on women and blacks, students generally seem to have no appreciation of social history as defined by professional historians

today.[52] Not surprisingly, given this context, they retain very little of the content they "learned" before coming to college, precisely because the way material was presented to them did not spark their imagination or interest beyond retaining enough information to pass the next test.

Overcoming boredom and disinterest with the subject and the necessity to repeat and go over what might be considered to be basic information about American history that should have been learned prior to college (from simple chronology, i.e., when was the American Revolution? to name identification, i.e., who was Teddy Roosevelt?) are only part of the problems faced at the college level. Add to it a very poor grasp on geography, be it location of places in the United States as well as the world and almost no appreciation of any global or international perspective. In short, even students who show interest in studying history are often very provincial in their view of the world and America's place in it.

Surely not all of these problems are the cause of the way in which history or more correctly social studies has been offered in elementary and secondary schools. What takes place in the classroom is hardly the only way in which people learn about history or develop attitudes and behavior that affect the way in which they look at the past. The beliefs, politics, and attitudes of family, the enormous influence of communication media from television to the movies, as well as an impressive youth culture shaped by the demands of the marketplace and advertising account executives, all play significant roles, both explicitly and implicitly in shaping attitudes, beliefs, and even interest in history.

This point, I think, must be emphasized. Too much of what passes for educational reform in this country, be it William Bennett's grand proposals for reshaping curriculum to the more modest and detailed efforts of people in the classroom, assume the basic soundness of American society and its social,

political, and economic institutions and structure. Their calls for educational reform, however creative or demanding, never raise questions or doubts about the fundamental strength or correctness of American life and thus fail to consider the possibility that real blocks to the better education of our children may lie less in the classroom than in what takes place outside it. The provincial attitudes of our students, their inability to question and to think independently, their failure to appreciate and accept cultural diversity, their lack of sensitivity to global and international settings, and their lack of an historical perspective from which to view current affairs and events then are hardly all due to the way in which history has been taught in American schools. Nor are changes in how we involve students in history likely to rectify the situation on its own. Still, both in the context of the charge of this paper and also as educators who believe that teachers can at least offer students alternatives to what they encounter elsewhere and skills to discern for themselves what to believe and how to act, it is worth proposing what might take place in the elementary grades in terms of the teaching and use of history.

Like our colleagues who have previously offered suggestions about history and elementary education, we agree that its most important goal is to take advantage of a child's natural curiosity and imagination to stimulate interest in the past and interest in learning. Neither as sanguine as the Schafer Committee, which had high expectations for skill development, nor as pessimistic of young children's capability as the Committee of Seven which delayed any instruction in history until the fourth grade, we believe that these goals go hand-in-hand with others in reaching young children. They include an appreciation, if not acceptance of cultural diversity; an understanding of citizenship that does not deny other peoples and cultures their own definitions; the breaking down of racial and sexual stereotypes; and initial development of skills involving the

use and appreciation of evidence for developing their own interpretation of events and for questioning what they hear and read.

In establishing this agenda, two overriding principles are paramount. First, it is essential, as the Committee of Ten first suggested, that an integrative approach to learning dominate in the early grades. By this we do not mean the substitution of "social studies" for history in whatever variations of the term that have been employed since 1916. Rather, we mean the blending of material and approaches from such disciplines as history, English, geography, art, and music in ways that bring the past alive and encourage the kind of skills and independent learning that can be accomplished in the lower grades. Secondly, the choice of subjects, or content, is essential, but only by thinking of content in less traditional ways than those proposed by historians who made suggestions in the past. To be as blunt as possible, K-6 should not be concerned with "covering" either chronologically or topically any field of history, be it American, ancient or European, to name the more traditional emphases that are mentioned in earlier reports. Although the lack of solid content background is a concern at the college level, that issue is best resolved in the secondary grades. If a proper foundation is laid in K-6, grades 7-12 provide ample opportunity for students to be exposed to the essentials of both American and world history. Rather, "content" in K-6 requires the selection of topics and engagement in study of them that encourages the kind of attitudes about learning and people and the development of skills that we have suggested. Selection of content, then, is absolutely critical, but not in the usual ways that historians and most professional educators have thought about K-6.

Encompassing reading, writing, art, music, history, and geography, group work as well as independent pursuits, our approach calls for discarding traditional notions of school time, subject differentiation, and content, at least

as we understand things to be in most elementary schools both in the past and today. When asked to give our own views of what should be done in the elementary grades, we were instructed to indicate what content we felt was absolutely necessary to include and what now being taught might be excluded. We were also asked to distinguish our content level by each grade in terms of how many 45-minute periods we would devote to history each week. The suggestions expressed in this charge are well-rooted in the recommendations of such reports as the Committee of Seven, the Committee of Eight, and in what takes place in the classroom today. They require, however, severe modification. An integrated approach of the kind we are suggesting calls for less discrimination of school subjects along these lines. Instead, blocks of time every day spanning several weeks or months (depending upon the content and the grade) would be set aside for exploring in integrated fashion the subject at hand. In our proposal, there is no necessary or unnecessary content in the context that earlier reports, or, for that matter, the charge for this paper, calls us to discern. The only issue for us is that the content used be of the kind, and presented in ways, that allows for our objectives to be met. If this is done properly, an appreciation and enthusiasm for learning coupled with an understanding of history, will serve well the ends of grades 7-12 that should be appropriately concerned with coverage of basic American and world history.

New Approaches: Biography and the Elementary Grades

But how to do it? Directed by our mandate, to offer one concrete curriculum proposal that would demonstrate what we hoped could be accomplished, we considered a number of possibilities. Everything from the Louisiana Purchase to a celebration of Mozart's birthday (suggested to us by a schoolteacher friend) cropped up. Serendipity, however, has played more than a small part in what we have to offer. On June 1, 1988, the New York Times carried a story

headlined "Fourth Graders Writing Biography and Opening a Door to History." It outlined in entertaining fashion a project taking place in a fourth-grade Queens public school classroom in which a class of nine-year-olds were writing fictionalized biographies of famous historical figures such as Benjamin Franklin, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Jointly conducted by a regular fourth-grade teacher, Milly Sturman, and a professor of education at Queens College, Myra Zarnowski, its content and use of time coincided closely with our own independent evaluation of what was possible in the elementary grades. Subsequent conversations with Zarnowski and an opportunity to read her own analysis of what went on in the classroom as well as a sample of the finished results only underlined this connection. What follows, then, draws very heavily on what has worked demonstrably in a regular New York City fourth grade composed of a heterogeneous body of school children from varied racial and economic backgrounds. As will be apparent, elements in it harken back to turn of the century reports that called for an emphasis on biography while encompassing in one way or another the gamut of objectives we think possible. For the most part, it is a recounting of what Zarnowski and Sturman have done, with some additional suggestions offered as to how to accomplish our agenda of goals.

Biography, indeed, is at the heart of Zarnowski's approach but hardly in the limited, undefined sense that turn of the century historians suggested occupy several 40-minute blocks of fourth and fifth graders' time in the nation's schools. Emphasizing projects both in what she calls fictionalized biographies and regular biographies, they usually involve three months of intensive work that integrate virtually all class room subjects (even at times including mathematics). In the process students engage in a variety of approaches, develop research and thinking skills, become aware of multicultural perspectives, the connection between past and present, and develop some sensitivity to important

human emotions and developments--all accomplished in a framework that develops an enthusiasm and appreciation for learning.[53]

Students who worked on regular biographies of Martin Luther King, Jr., for example, began by reading and by hearing their teacher read to them, biographies of King. They kept journals in which they wrote their impressions of what they read. Using other material, including newspaper clippings, photographs, and the documentary film "Eyes on the Prize," they also constructed a timeline and developed a sense of "events in history" that paralleled King's life.[54]

With careful help and guidance from their teachers, students individually began to write their biographies--each composed of three chapters that in succession concentrated on the historical times in which King lived, King's own life, and finally the connections between his life and the times. For each chapter, students read each other's work, offered criticism and commentary, and collectively experienced the joy, hard work, and satisfaction of writing history.

Students, for example, as the Times tells it, generally agreed on the content of the first chapter. Included in the table of contents for chapter one of Chrissy Ann Della-Corte's biography, "A Peaceful Hero," for example, were the following: Jim Crow Laws, school segregation, the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the Children's Crusade, and the March on Washington. The second chapter detailed King's upbringing, nicely integrating his own experiences as a young boy into the general pattern of segregation developed in chapter one, as well as his adult years as a Civil Rights leader. Interspersed throughout are illustrations by the authors (Chrissy's, for example, contained 14 drawings ranging from "Martin, in his spare time, read lectures of Ghandi," to "Black boys throwing rocks into windows") as well as the author's own interpretations of what they have been reading. In one of the more sophisticated of the fourth

grader's work, again Chrissy Della Corte's, she notes that Martin read Ghandi's lectures. Ghandi, she tells us, was an Indian leader who fought for his country's freedom by nonviolence and fasting. Commenting on Ghandi's influence on King, she suggests that King "just kept fighting--not with violence, but with nonviolence." Rhetorically she asks, "Isn't that hard?" She answers, "not if you've been influenced by so many people, like his father, his mother, one principal of the school he went to, and Ghandi. These were very special people to Martin. That's why he was influenced by them."

Finally, the third chapter offers interpretations on King's impact on American history. As Nicole Carino put it in her closing chapter, "Martin did a lot to stop segregation. For example he made many speeches, like the 'I have a dream' speech and 'I've been to the mountaintop' speech. When his words came out so strongly people finally realized that segregation was unfair and mean and so they turned against it."[55] Or as Chrissy Della-Corte concluded, "Martin made speeches that affected history. As he spoke people understood more clearly what Martin had meant about segregation. Every time the white people heard these speeches it gave them a bad feeling that what they had done was wrong." As she eloquently concluded, "The words of Martin Luther King were starting to come alive."

In all, the finished biographies run some 40 to 50 pages, including illustrations, table of contents, and bibliography. Chrissy's work, according to her bibliography, included reading in whole or in part seven books about Martin Luther King, including one that contained excerpts from his speeches. The more ambitious students, savvy about the art of publicity and commercial possibility, also included endorsements from teachers and friends. One endorsement in Chrissy's book summarizes both the nature of the project and the sense of pride and enthusiasm for oneself and for learning that such work evoked for the students.

The critic wrote,

> It's obvious that you've read much about the life and times of Martin Luther King Jr., you've been immersed in material about this great leader. "A Peaceful Hero" reflects the time and energy you've devoted to your studies of him. Your use of questions and dialogue is wonderful. As a language arts teacher who shares fine literature with students of all ages, I must tell you that your book would be welcome as an addition to the library at 201.

Although Chrissy, herself didn't comment about her reactions to such praise, another classmate, talking about his own sense of accomplishment, put it this way: "I'm proud of myself that I can write so much and have my own book. It's nice to have your own book. It's like a masterpiece."[56]

No doubt neither Chrissy nor her classmates ever expected their work to be quoted in other contexts so soon after completion. But we have purposely included excerpts from their work because they go to the heart of our propositions about history in the elementary grades. First and foremost, these students are excited about learning and proud of their accomplishments. In confronting a significant person and his involvement in a key movement in the 20th century, they have learned about racial conflict, prejudice, and also the possibility of reconciliation. Coming from mixed racial and economic backgrounds, they have been able to compare their own experiences with those of the past and see the connections. (As one black child observed, "Dr. King's dream didn't fully come true, but half of it came true. There's still segregation and prejudice in their world but blacks got their rights. I never knew that segregation was so bad. All my friends in school are so nice to me. It's hard to believe there was such a word as segregation.")[57] Along the way they have read a wide variety of books on the same subject, learned about how to use factual information to inform their own interpretations of events, and developed writing skills and interests that would have seemed impossible to those professional historians who have written about how to teach history in elementary schools.

Our observations on the possibilities of this approach are reinforced by Zarnowski's own evaluations of another classroom project she has conducted--one that emphasized the writing of fictionalized biographies of Benjamin Franklin. The process is similar to the King project with the difference being that students also read fictionalized biographies--"life histories in which the author adds events that might have happened or dialogue that might have been spoken but for which there is no clear historical evidence"--and then write their own by introducing themselves as narrators or as a fictional character within their books.[58] As she notes, this in-depth learning process successfully promotes the learning of reading and writing skills and of content at the same time, makes students acquire knowledge from a variety of sources, and encourages them to seek new information in ways that excites them about learning. Particularly rewarding, from her perspective, is the ability of this approach to allow "low-ability" readers equal involvement in the same kind of learning experience of more advanced students in the class.

Clearly the approach developed by Zarnowski, which reflects the influence of Kieran Egan and others, is a useful model for dealing with the skill objectives and with the goal of encouraging student interest, imagination, and enthusiasm about history and learning in general that are our concerns.[59] With very little modification, involving choice of content and teacher direction of discussion and writing, other of our objectives are also obtainable. Concern about appreciation of diversity--ethnic, sexual, and cultural--clearly a by-product of the King project but less apparent in the Franklin one can easily be encouraged by choice of topic and the questions one asks students to consider. Franklin's involvement with Indians in America, for example, or with the French, lend themselves to all kinds of possibilities here. Biographies of women obviously offer opportunities to deal with gender issues.

More specific attention to matters of geography, music, and art are also possible. Taking the King project as an example, students can be introduced to issues of geography by locating the significant places where King's civil rights activities took place and by tracing the route of the March on Washington. Similarly, making use of the rich black and folk music tradition involved with the Civil Rights movement can promote music instruction, participation, and appreciation. Involvement in art, beyond the drawing of pictures to accompany the biographies, can easily be expanded to include a range of activities from looking at Farm Security Administration photographs of black life to paintings and photographs evoked by the Civil Rights movement and by King in particular.

While Zarnowski's approach clearly emphasizes biography, it takes only a little imagination to realize that her approach, along with our own suggestions, can also apply to other "content," be it the experience of a particular group of people or an appreciation of an event like the Louisiana Purchase. What is imperative, however, is that the choice of subject permits examination of an array of material and that traditional definitions of "coverage" and "content" be rejected.

All this is heady stuff, far different, it seems to us, from what historians in the past have suggested should be at the core of elementary history education. Critical to accomplishing it is the need to rethink what we mean by acceptable content and how we organize school time. While it does not preclude separate hour-by-hour instruction in subjects such as reading, grammar, mathematics, art, and music, it insists that, in the area of history or social studies, an integrated approach aimed at the objectives we have laid out is far more useful in both the long and short run than what is usually proposed for these areas in K-6. No doubt all of what we propose will not work in K-3. Here, however, much like our historian ancestors, introducing students to a

wide range of personalities--representing gender and cultural diversity from mythology, history, and historical fiction--can help young students learn to read, listen well, and become excited about the kinds of work they will be able to accomplish in grades 4-6. Hopefully, engagement in the kinds of activities that we have outlined here, carried out in grades 4-6, will then set the appropriate stage for more traditionally content-oriented work in grades 7-12.

Suggestions for Teacher Training

The approach we have outlined calls for stimulating the imagination and independent learning skills of students. It also demands that teachers be more imaginative and independent in the choice of materials they develop for classroom use. Leaving aside the obvious need for school boards and state evaluation bodies to reconsider dramatically what they find appropriate for K-6 social studies, these proposals require a different course in teacher training than presently exists, one somewhat similar to the vague proposals of the Committee of Eight.

Currently, at Michigan State University, for example, a bachelor's degree in elementary education requires all students to take one elective course in American history as part of a 30-credit methods-content general requirement for all students.[60] In addition, students may choose one major or two minors to round out their program from the following fields: language arts, social studies, fine arts, science, mathematics, physical education, and urban studies. Under this system, it is possible for a student to ignore social studies entirely and graduate with a teaching certificate having taken at most only one history course. (At MSU it is usually History 121, a 4-credit introductory survey covering American history from 1700 through the Civil War.) If students choose social studies as a major, they are required to take an additional elective in American history and then from 3 to 12 credits in three areas that

include history, psychology, geography, economics, political science, and anthropology. If social studies is chosen as a minor, students must take one elective in American history and then are free to choose 12 to 15 credits in electives that may include courses from history or any of the other fields that make up social studies.

The kind of integrated learning approach that we are recommending for K-6 clearly requires some reordering of these teacher training requirements. At Michigan State, for example, we would propose two minors: one elective from the various choices now possible, and one required that would include for all elementary education college students a core of courses in history, language arts, art, music, and geography. This required core would guarantee prospective teachers exposure to the basic skills and approaches of those disciplines that are critical for carrying out the learning approach we support. A typical teaching minor carries 36 credits at Michigan State; from 9 to 12 courses depending on whether they are 3 or 4 credits each. Dividing the credits so that art and music each receive one course, that leaves anywhere from 7 to 10 courses to be divided among three fields. Even more flexibility is possible here, as many students will take language art courses from the English department as part of their general content/methods requirement.

Pushing solely from the perspective of history, then, it is feasible to require our prospective teacher to take, as part of this required minor, at least three and perhaps as many as five courses in history beyond the one taken as part of the required 30 credits in content/methods. One of these courses should introduce students to the discipline of history: how to read it, use evidence, be aware of its methods, and write it. At Michigan State this would mean History 201 which now stands as a required course for all History majors including secondary school teacher education history majors. Also required should be a course similar to our History 426, Global Perspectives, which is

now required for secondary school students who major in history. This course encourages students to place historical analysis in a multicultural, global perspective and helps them discard provincial attitudes about American and Western exceptionalism. The other three courses may be spread over a variety of subject areas, but at least one should be in either non-Western or European history.

This proposed reordering of teacher education requirements aims at producing teachers who have an appreciation of the methods and approaches of the key disciplines that are necessary for the kind of integrative approach to social studies teaching we endorse. Specifically, in terms of history, it calls for instruction that teaches methodology, the development of skills of interpretation, use of evidence, and an appreciation of multicultural and global perspectives, while also allowing some opportunity for exposure to content that hopefully will stimulate teachers' own imaginations of what might work for them in the classroom.

What, in part, we are demanding, both in these proposals for teacher training and also in the way in which history or social studies is taught in the elementary grades, is the kind of attention and care to K-6 that, at least in terms of the discipline of history, has usually been devoted only to the secondary grades.

Educational Reform and American Society

Attention must be paid to other matters as well. However carefully teachers might be trained in this different way, and however well such newly trained teachers might practice the kind of integrated approach that we endorse and that people like Milly Sturman and Myra Zarnowski have shown can work, more fundamental changes in attitudes and actions are required both in and out of schools for this approach to education to have any long term, significant

impact on the kind of citizens and the kind of society we develop. Inside the schools, only if teachers are given the time and encouragement to participate in innovative approaches, only if more than lip service by William Bennett and others is given to the importance of teaching as a profession, can the profession attract the consistent quality of energetic and bright people who might make this work. Even more decisively, even if this utopian goal is achieved, it must be underlined that education in the classroom, however wonderful it might be, is only one way in which a young child learns about life. In short, it will make very little difference in the long run if a fourth grader exposed to the wonders of learning and the excitement of accomplishment by studying Martin Luther King, Jr., returns to school corridors full of dope pushers, to streets full of crime and violence, or to homes broken by lack of economic opportunity. Despite the potential for learning and growth that exists in the minds of all children at birth regardless of race, class, or circumstance, the economic, social, and political realities of this nation make clear that what we are proposing will not work for everyone. Only by encouraging a sincere questioning of how our society is structured, the values it promotes and the real inequities it produces, can the kind of educational reform proposed here have any lasting impact for all of our children.

Footnotes

[1]Leo J. Alilunas, "Major Controversies over the 'Social Studies' in American Secondary Education," Harvard Education Review, 19(Winter, 1949), 1-15; R.D. Barr, John Barth, and S.S. Shermis, Defining the Social Studies, Bulletin 51, (Arlington Virginia: National Council for the Social Studies, 1977), 15-55; Hazel Hertzberg, Social Studies Reform, 1880-1980 (Boulder, CO., Social Science Education, Inc.); N. Ray Hiner, "Professions in Process: Changing Relations Between Historians and Educators, 1896-1911," History of Education Quarterly, 12(Spring, 1972), 34-56; Oliver M. Keels, Jr., "The Collegiate Influence on the Early Social Studies Curriculum: A Reassessment of the Role of Historians," Theory and Research in Social Education, 8(Fall, 1980), 105-120; Paul Robinson, "The Conventional Historians of the Social Studies," Theory and Research in Social Education, 8(Fall, 1980), 65-88.

[2]Report of the Committee of Ten on Secondary School Studies (New York, National Education Association, 1894).

[3]Committee of Ten, pp. 4-7, 28-30, 162-201.

[4]Ibid., pp. 170, 177-178.

[5]Ibid, p. 198.

[6]Ibid, p. 168.

[7]The Study of History in the Schools, Report of the American Historical Association by the Committee of Seven (New York, 1899).

[8]Ibid., pp. 16-26.

[9]Ibid., pp. 158-166.

[10]Ibid., pp. 167-172.

[11]The Study of History in the Elementary Schools, Report to the American Historical Association by the Committee of Eight (New York, 1909). For coverage of the committee's four years of work see "Report of the Conference on Teaching of History in Elementary Schools," Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1905 (Washington, D.C., 1906), pp. 133-45; "Report of Conference on Teaching of History in Schools," Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1906 (Washington, D.C., 1907), pp. 61-104.

[12]Ibid., ix-x.

[13]Ibid., x-xvii.

[14]Ibid., pp. 1-11.

[15]Ibid., pp. 9-11.

[16]Ibid., pp. 12-21, 98.

[17]Ibid., pp. 48-90, 98.

[18]Ibid., pp. 17-21.

[19]Ibid., pp. 22-48, 30.

[20]Ibid., pp. 22-23.

[21]Ibid., pp. 92-95.

[22]Ibid., pp. 116-123.

[23]For the significance of the NEA report, see Hertzberg, Social Studies Reform, 1880-1980, pp. 25-42.

[24]The Schafer Committee's report appeared in the pages of The Historical Outlook between October, 1919 and June, 1921. The Historical Outlook, 10(May, 1919), 273-274.

[25]Ibid., pp. 274-280.

[26]Ibid., p. 275.

[27]Ibid., p. 277.

[28]Ibid., pp. 277-279.

[29]Ibid., 11(March, 1920), p. 112.

[30]Charles A. Beard, A Charter for the Social Sciences in the Schools (New York, 1932), p. vii.

[31]Ibid., p. vi.

[32]Ibid., p. 97.

[33]Ibid., pp. 98-108.

[34]Ibid., p. 99.

[35]American Historical Association, Conclusions and Recommendations of the Commission (New York, 1934), pp. 57-60.

[36]Howard K. Beale, Are American Teachers Free? An Analysis of Restraints Upon the Freedom of Teaching in American Schools (New York, 1936), p. viii.

[37]Merle Curti, The Social Ideas of American Educators (New York, 1935); Bessie L. Pierce, Citizens' Organizations and the Civic Training of Youth (New York, 1933).

[38]Curti, The Social Ideas of American Educators, p. xv.

[39]Beard, A Charter for the Social Sciences, p. vii.

[40]James A. Michener, The Future of the Social Studies: Proposals for an Experimental Social Studies Curriculum (Cambridge, 1939), p. i.

[41]Ibid., p. 74. Krey's plan is in his A Regional Program for the Social Studies (New York, 1938). It was implemented on an experimental basis in Minnesota for three years.

[42]Michener, The Future of the Social Studies, pp. 72-77.

[43]Allan Nevins, "American History For Americans," New York Times Magazine, May 3, 1942, pp. 3, 28.

[44]Edgar Wesley, American History in the Schools and Colleges (New York, 1944), p. 14.

[45]Ibid., pp. 61-63.

[46]Ibid., pp. 74-76.

[47]Ibid., pp. 94-96.

[48]Richard S. Kirkendall, "The Status of History in the Schools," The Journal of American History, 62(Sept., 1975), 557-570.

[49]American Historical Association Newsletter, "Perspectives," 25 (May-June, 1987), 20-23.

[50]As Hazel Hertzberg and Ray Hiner indicate, it is not always easy to assess the way in which these reports actually influenced the teaching of elementary school history or social studies. They also note that in that story is another one that deals with the development of professions. Our charge, however, is strictly limited to presenting what historians have said about K-6 education and to offering our own views on what might be done here.

[51]These statistics are based on an analysis of history department data at Michigan State University where Peter Levine has been associate chair for undergraduate education since 1982. Discussions with individuals in similar capacities at other universities show similar results.

[52]Frances Fitzgerald, American History Revised: History Textbooks in the Twentieth Century (Boston, 1979).

[53]My knowledge of Zarnowski's work comes from several extended conversations with her, an essay that appeared in a forthcoming issue of Reading Teacher titled "Learning About Fictionalized Biographies: A Reading and Writing Approach," the New York Times article, and from several student biographies completed by fourth graders under her supervision.

[54]Conversations with Zarnowski; New York Times, June 1, 1988.

[55]New York Times, June 1, 1988.

[56]Ibid.

[57]Ibid.

[58]Myra Zarnowski, "Helping Students Write Historical Fiction," Edited by Jeff Golub. Activities to Promote Critical Thinking, (Urbana; IL, 1986), pp. 139-143. "Learning About Fictionalized Biographies: A Reading and Writing

Approach," The Reading Teacher, (forthcoming). Zarnowski is completing a book on her approach entitled Learning About Biography: A Reading and Writing Approach to be published by the National Council of Teachers of English.

[59]Kieran Egan, "Children's Path to Reality from Fantasy: Contrary Thoughts About Curriculum Foundations," Journal of Curriculum Studies, 15(1983), 357-71; Teaching as Storytelling: An Alternative Approach to Teaching and the Curriculum (London, 1988); Linda Levstik, "The Relationship Between Historical Response and Narrative in a Sixth Grade Classroom," Theory and Research in Social Education, 14(Winter, 1986), 1-19.

[60]The following analysis is based on requirements currently in practice at the College of Education at Michigan State University.